

VZCZCXRO0145
PP RUEHBI RUEHCI
DE RUEHCI #0059 0471300
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 161300Z FEB 07
FM AMCONSUL KOLKATA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1414
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1309
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 0557
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 0551
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0229
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0344
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0346
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0272
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 1741

UNCLAS KOLKATA 000059

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: SECOND PHASE OF MANIPUR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS OFFERS NO CLEAR
INDICATION OF CONGRESS'S PROSPECTS

REF: KOLKATA 0028

11. (U) On February 14, three valley districts of the Northeast Indian state of Manipur -- Imphal West, Imphal East and Bishnupur -- constituting 29 constituencies out of the 60-seat Assembly, went to the second phase of the state Legislative Assembly polls. The national-ruling Congress Party, presently rules the state in a coalition government, the Secular Progressive Front, with support from the Communist Party of India (CPI). Congress has candidates in all constituencies. The main regional opposition party Manipur People's Party (MPP) has 25, the CPI 15, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) 15, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 9, the Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) 16 and the Communist Party of India - Marxist (CPM) 1. Despite heavy rains, a remarkable 85% voter turnout was recorded. Of the 827 polling stations, as many as 181 were categorized as "hyper-sensitive" and 645 as "sensitive" for security reasons in the insurgency-torn state. Special security measures were adopted throughout the second phase polling area and special police protection units patrolled the election districts. The first phase was held in 19 constituencies on February 8 and the third and final phase will be conducted in 12 constituencies on February 23. Counting of votes will take place on February 27.

12. (SBU) While the polling was generally peaceful, a series of violent incidents occurred in the run-up to the second phase. On February 12, a Congress worker was shot at but not injured in Heirangoithong and gunmen also attempted without success to kill a presiding officer of a polling station for allegedly distributing money among voters on behalf of a Congress candidate. Industry minister and CPI candidate for the Kumbi seat, N. Mangi Singh, accused Congress workers of kidnapping one of his men and lodged a complaint with the chief election officer. On February 9, three Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) constables were among five persons killed and 10 others injured when United National Liberation Front (UNLF) militants attacked a poll party in Ukhrul district (Naga area bordering Burma). In addition to the CRPF personnel, a polling official and a driver of state police were also killed.

13. (SBU) The outcome of polls in the twin Imphal districts and Bishnupur, where the majority of the voters are Meiteis (ethnic Manipuris), is expected to determine which party or coalition will form the next government. Contacts said that no party is expected to gain absolute majority, and a hung assembly is possible. Congress's principal rival in the state, the regional MPP, advocates for greater Meitei rights, with one of its key

agendas the repeal of the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which grants the military broad authority to arrest, detain and to seize property.

JARDINE